

VZCZCXYZ0001  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUL #3018/01 2780552  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 050552Z OCT 07  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6839  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3205  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3345  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUALSFJ/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA  
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J2 SEOUL KOR  
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J5 SEOUL KOR  
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA SCJS SEOUL KOR  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//OSD/ISA/EAP//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 003018

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/10/2014  
TAGS: [KN](#) [KS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#)  
SUBJECT: UNDP CHANGES PRIMARY RULES AMID FRAUD ALLEGATIONS

Classified By: POL Joseph Y. Yun. Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) Summary: The United New Democratic Party (UNDP) announced October 3 it would combine the remaining eight primary races into a "one-shot" one-day primary event on October 14. The party hopes to address allegations of voter fraud and generate more voter interest with the change. The single day event will include mobile phone voting and polling and the results will be announced at the party convention on October 15. The mid-primary change was requested by Sohn Hak-kyu and Lee Hae-chan, both trailing Chung Dong-young by a significant margin, accusing Chung of illegal campaigning in Busan. If the primary had continued as planned, Chung would likely have been the winner since he has stronger organization and a big lead. Now the outcome is less certain, but Chung is still the odds-on favorite. End Summary.

-----  
SERIAL TO ONE-SHOT PRIMARY  
-----

12. (U) The original UNDP primary rules were to combine the electoral college votes (weighted as 90 percent of the result) and the opinion poll outcome (constituting 10 percent). The electoral college votes were to be divided into three different subgroups: the general public who registered to take part in the primary; party members who registered to take part; and the general public who registered to take part in the mobile phone primary. The remaining votes were originally scheduled in Daejeon, South Choongchung and North Jeolla Provinces on October 6, in Incheon and Gyeonggi Province on the 7th, in Daegu and North Gyeongsang Province on the 13th, and in Seoul on the 14th.

13. (U) Instead, those remaining primaries will be rolled into one "one-shot" election held on October 14 in a last-gasp effort to make the UNDP primary exciting. The results from the previous primaries will stand. Currently, Chung has 43.1 percent of the vote with a 13,000 vote lead over Sohn and a 21,000 vote lead over Lee after tallying the 121,698 valid votes so far.

-----  
FRAUD AND IRREGULARITIES  
-----

14. (C) The UNDP agreed to delay the remaining primaries in response to demands from Lee Hae-chan and Sohn Hak-kyu to address frontrunner Chung Dong-young's alleged election law

violations. A Chung supporter has been charged with stealing the identities of 100 voters -- including President Roh Moo-hyun -- and registering them with the party's electoral college. The probe centers on whether a Chung campaign official colluded on the illegal voter-mobilization drive. One of Chung's advisors told poloff that while the Chung supporter was wrong to register Roh and others for the primary, Sohn and Lee supporters were also engaged in false registration.

15. (C) These allegations are not helping the UNDP, instead reinforcing the public's disenchantment with the UNDP and general disinterest in the primary outcome. The GNP commented today that the UNDP party primaries were on par with "a primary school class president election." The mounting disgust with the UNDP candidates showed in an October 2 poll by CBS that had independent candidate Moon Kuk-hyun's support rate second to Chung (at 11 percent) with 8.1 percent support, ahead of Sohn and Lee.

-----  
SOHN HAK-KYU BREATHE EASIER  
-----

16. (C) On September 19 Sohn first raised suspicions that Chung's campaign had faked votes, an action that Sohn protested through self-imposed seclusion from September 19-20. One of Sohn's close advisors, Lee Youn-saeng, told poloff the change in primary format was a "gift" and Sohn could now breathe easier since, if the primary rules had not been changed, Sohn had little chance to secure the nomination. Now, Sohn would focus on encouraging supporters to register for mobile voting.

17. (C) Despite the highest approval rating among UNDP candidates when the primary began in September, most pundits have written Sohn off after his poor showing in the first rounds of voting. Also, many suggest his repeated calls for change to the primary rules has further eroded his support and he now polls at around 5 percent support. Some attribute Sohn's missteps to his elite background and the fact that he suffers from the "youngest-sibling" syndrome, which says that youngest siblings expect all will be given to them. According to many, this "syndrome" has manifested itself in his departure from the GNP and in his threats to leave the UNDP.

-----  
LEE HAE-CHAN GETS MAD  
-----

18. (C) Lee, calling the party's elections, "the most corrupt ones in the nation's history," chose to close ranks with Sohn Hak-kyu and team up against frontrunner Chung to secure a change in primary format. According to assembly sources, Lee was infuriated at Chung's illegal tactics in Busan that led to a surprise Chung victory there. Many Roh supporters hoped the famous Roh-sa-mo -- the name of the fervent Roh support group -- could carry Lee to the nomination. So far, the link to Roh has hurt Lee and coupled with his low charisma, Lee has been unable to motivate any but the closest Roh supporters. He now trails both Chung and Sohn after the first eight rounds of voting.

-----  
CHUNG DONG-YOUNG: STILL THE LEADER  
-----

19. (C) Chung still is in the lead and even with the new primary format, he is likely to eke out a victory if the current interest level in the UNDP remains at rock-bottom since Chung has the strongest nation-wide organization and currently leads all polls among the liberal candidates. Chung advisor Cho Beckhee told poloffs the camp was still optimistic Chung could win the primary, though she said Chung was personally affronted by the allegations of wrongdoing. The Chung camp, according to Cho, refused to engage in negative campaign tactics and would go along with the party's decision to change the primary format, but she personally

agreed the change made the party look bad and would not help generate overall support. She said, assuming Chung wins the candidacy, their goal was to get his support ratings up to 30 percent by December and hope that Lee's support came down to 40 percent since a ten percent gap could be overcome on voting day.

-----  
COMMENT  
-----

¶10. (C) With only 30-40 percent of the votes cast, a "one-shot" simultaneous primary, and mobile voting and poll results still remaining, the UNDP nomination is not quite Chung Dong-young's yet. Assuming Chung wins, his place in the December election as the sole standard bearer for the progressives is not certain. Before that main event, Chung will have to face another run-off against several progressive and ruling coalition candidates. One of these will be the Democratic Party's nominee, probably the perennial candidate Lee In-je. The other is likely to be former Yuhwan-Kimberly President Moon Kuk-hyun, now rapidly closing in the polls largely thanks to poor management and the public's lack of interest in the UNDP race.

VERSHBOW